

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure today that I welcome the crewmembers of the USS Ozark back to Portland, OR to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the ship's commissioning on September 23, 1944. The Ozark, built by the Willamette Iron and Steel Corporation here in Portland, crossed the Columbia River bar less than 2 weeks later and played a vital role in our Nation's victory in the Pacific Theater during World War II. The Pacific Theater saw some of the war's most dangerous naval encounters, and the commitment of the USS Ozark's crewmembers is a testimony of their bravery and sacrifice.

In the Pacific Theater, the ship and its crew transported troops for the invasion of Iwo Jima and evacuated wounded Marines to hospitals in Guam. After seeing further action in the Pacific Theater, the USS Ozark was present in Tokyo Harbor during the historic ceremony where the Japanese surrendered on board the USS Missouri. The ship then returned 950 recovered American prisoners of war to the United States via Guam and Pearl Harbor.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who served aboard the USS Ozark for their brave efforts in the defense of our Nation. I wish them a festive 60th anniversary celebration this week in Portland.